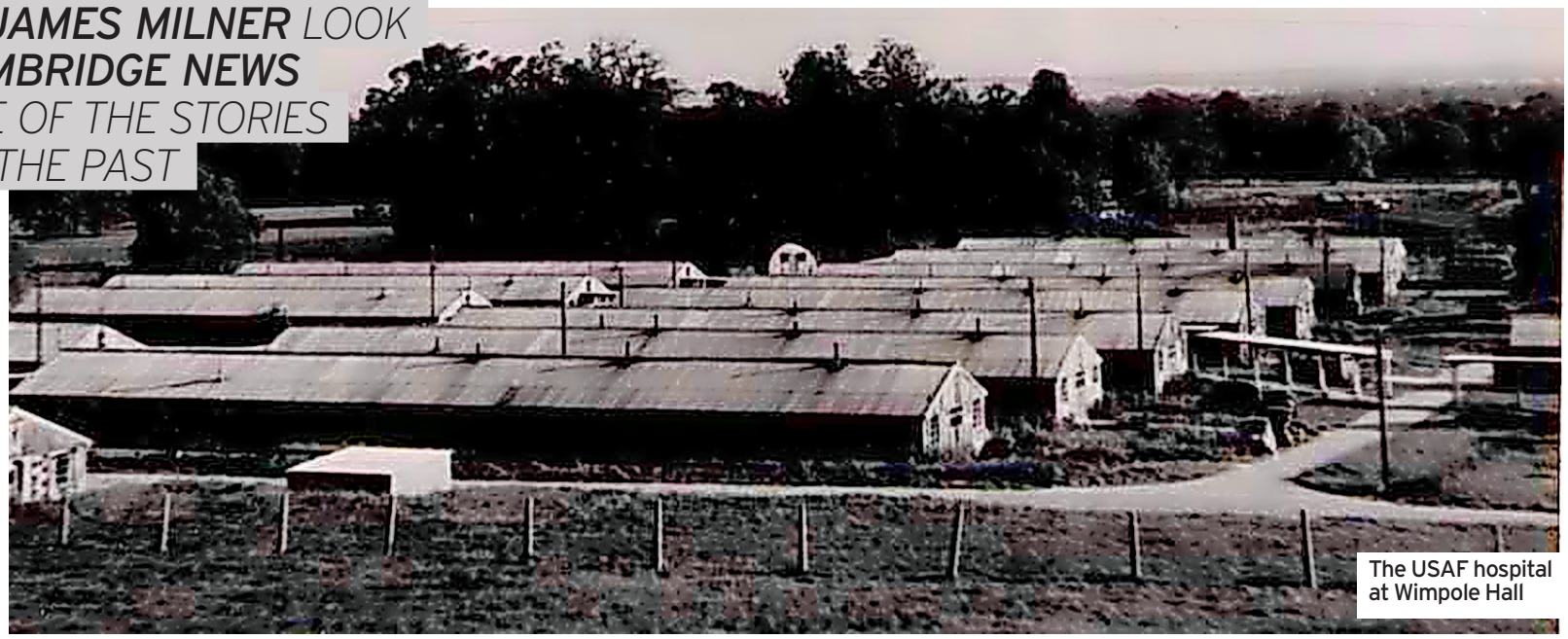
NOSTALGIA

Pro-Ayatollah demonstration held and US hospital is on the move

MIKE PETTY AND JAMES MILNER LOOK THROUGH THE CAMBRIDGE NEWS ARCHIVES AT SOME OF THE STORIES FROM THIS DAY IN THE PAST



The USAF hospital at Wimpole Hall

First demonstration to begin with mass prayer – 1979

TWO hundred Iranian students made Cambridge demonstration history when they knelt on Parker's Piece, prayed and recited from the Koran.

In what is thought to be the first political demonstration starting with a mass prayer ritual on improvised prayer mats covering the wet turf, the Muslims called upon Allah to bless the efforts of the Ayatollah Khomeini to establish a republic in Iran based on Koranic law.

They then marched to the Market Square. No incidents were reported though some confusion existed among Saturday shoppers, knowing it was the first day of Rag Week.

But the slogans "Death to the Shah" and "Long live Khomeini" soon dispelled their doubts.

Felling the great elm avenue at Wimpole Hall – 1977

AFTER more than 200 years, the great elm avenue at Wimpole Hall, has now almost completely disappeared.

The 202 elms had become so old and diseased that administrators were forced to call in contractors to fell the entire three-quarter-mile section of the avenue that stands on Wimpole land.

The task has taken months and now little more than logs survive to tell the tale. Now the work of re-planting with lime trees will begin.

Prince Philip tipped to become university chancellor – 1976

PRINCE Philip is now the strongest contender for the chancellorship of the university.

Informed sources have disclosed that Prince Charles was offered the post but turned it down because of his naval commitments with HMS Bronington.

Lord Ramsey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, is thought to have declined the invitation while Mr Selwyn Lloyd, recently retired speaker of the House of Commons, is still regarded by many dons as too close to contemporary politics to command unanimous support.

Prince Philip has for many years maintained a close formal and informal interest in Cambridge and has seen Cambridge life from the student viewpoint through unannounced visits while Prince Charles was up at Trinity.

There were plans to extend the premises of Boots in Sidney Street

Work begins on the extension of chemist's – 1959

WORK has begun on greatly increasing the area of Messrs Boots the Chemist's premises in Sidney Street by the demolition of the old Essex and Suffolk Assurance Company buildings.

It will double the width of the frontage and the shopping area behind and provide twin entrances on to the street.

The staff accommodation will be more than doubled and the facilities vastly improved. Boots believe the staff cannot be expected to look after customers properly unless their own interests are properly served by the company. Contented staff means contented customers.

US Air Force hospital to be moved – 1959

THE United States Air Force hospital at Wimpole Hall will move to RAF stations at Mildenhall and Lakenheath later this year.

The move will affect 300 US military personnel and 95 UK civilians.

The facilities are on private land and this has to be handed back to the owner by the end of 1959.

They were constructed by the British Ministry of Works in 1943 and operated by the US Army until 1945.

In 1951, the 7510th USAF Hospital was stationed there.

Three killed as RAF bomber crashes on to houses – 1941

AN RAF bomber crashed on to houses in Histon Road, killing three aged women – Miss Catharine Allen, Mrs Ann Warland, Mrs Ada Sara Blackwell. A fourth, Mrs Mary Hewitt, was taken to hospital.

Pc George Smith told the Inquest that at 2.25am, he was on duty in Histon Road, Cambridge, when he saw a large plane flying very low. It struck the roofs on one side of the road and then crashed into the houses on the other side of the road coming to rest on a tennis court at the back of the houses. The chief damage to the houses was to the roofs and top floors

With the help of other officers he searched the wreckage and found the bodies under the debris in the bedrooms of the respective houses. He also assisted other people out of the damaged houses, which were 145 and 147 Histon Road and numbers 1 and 2 Roseneath Villas.

A warm tribute to the work of the police in rescuing other residents in the damaged houses was paid by Miss Allen, two of whose sisters were amongst those who escaped.

An eyewitness who was on the scene few minutes after said that the first officer to arrive was no longer recognisable as a police officer, being covered with plaster and dirt from the debris in his strenuous efforts at rescue.

The Pilot Officer in command of the aircraft describing the incident, said he was returning from a raid on Germany in very bad weather. A Squadron Leader said the pilot took the only possible action.

The crew were uninjured.

The coroner said it was a very regrettable accident. We were living in unusual times and unusual things happened, of which this regrettable incident occurrence was one.

He expressed sympathy with the relatives of the deceased women and the RAF Squadron Leader asked to be associated with this.

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